



# **TECH CONFERENCE PREPARATION TRAINING INDEED, INC.**

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## **FOR LOVE OF DOG, START YOUR TIMER**

# ABOUT ME

VM (VICKY) BRASSEUR



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Open source policy & strategy  
freelancer, trainer, and author.

VERY frequent public speaker

Here's my contact information.

I encourage you to use it.

# ABOUT YOU

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How many of you have never presented at a conference before?

How many of you have presented at a conference multiple times?

Are there any devrels/dev advocates/  
community managers in the audience?

How many of you are just here to get away  
from your desk on a Wednesday  
afternoon? ;-)

## Slides

<https://archive.org/details/20180228-speakertraining>

## Resources

[https://github.com/vmbrasseur/Public\\_Speaking](https://github.com/vmbrasseur/Public_Speaking)

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These slides are already available, both with and without speaker notes

This is a github repo of dozens of resources for learning how to be a better conference speaker. Contributions welcome.

I'll show both of these URLs again at the end, so you don't have to grab them now

# WHAT I'LL COVER TODAY

1. Finding conferences & CFPs (calls for proposals)
2. Tracking and organising conferences and CFPs
3. Learning about your audience
4. Characteristics of a good talk abstract
5. Writing a good talk abstract
6. Writing a good proposal title
7. Organising proposals, presentations, and related materials
8. Handling rejection

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Now, let's set up some expectations. What am I going to cover today?

Pretty much everything up to the point where submit a talk to a conference.

Each section has a Q&A built in at the end, so there'll be plenty of time to ask questions.

Also, please save those questions for the Q&A sections. This will give our video chat friends some hope of participating in the discussion.

# WHAT I WILL *NOT* COVER


Pretty much everything after getting your proposal accepted:

- ▶ Writing a good presentation
- ▶ Delivering a good presentation
- ▶ Presenting a demo
- ▶ Handling the audience
- ▶ Post-event follow-up
- ▶ Etc.

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This training will get your talk accepted to the event.

There may be another training later which will talk about what to do after getting a talk accepted.



# **FINDING CONFERENCES AND CFPS**

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OK, so you want to present,  
but how do you find these  
conferences?





There used to be a very good website for searching for conferences, but, alas, it has now died.





There used to be a very good mailing list for telling you which conferences were happening, but it's now on hiatus, perhaps permanently. So what do you do?



# ALAS, IT'S A VERY MANUAL PROCESS

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There's no one place to go to find these things

It requires paying attention as well as creating a tracking mechanism

I'll talk about tracking conferences & CFPs in a bit, but first let me give you some of the best resources for finding out about conferences.

# OPENSOURCE.COM EVENTS CALENDAR

<https://opensource.com/resources/conferences-and-events-monthly>

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I'm not just saying this because I'm an author & moderator for [opensource.com](https://opensource.com)

It's legitimately one of the best places to find conferences [opensource.com](https://opensource.com) receives 1.1 million visitors a month, so there are a lot of people looking at and contributing to this thing, and they're coming from all corners of the tech world

It's community-driven (though moderated), so you can add conferences to it please do!

However, because it's community-driven, it also means it only has the events people have thought to contribute. It isn't comprehensive (but nothing is).

# PAPERCALL.IO

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Also community driven (you can add events)

Allows you to limit by events with open CFPs, or which offer travel assistance

Can set up searches as email alerts, which is quite handy

Looks like it's trying to evolve into Lanyrd 2.0

Worth keeping your eye on this one



# @CALLBACKWOMEN

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Focused on increasing  
diversity of tech speakers

Boosts the signal on  
conferences and CFPs

If you do the Twitter thing, this  
is a good one to follow

# YOUR COMMUNITIES (INCLUDING OTHER SPEAKERS)

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If you're participating in FOSS communities, ask them which conferences they're excited about.

If you know conference speakers, ask which conferences they have on their radar.

You can learn about a lot of really interesting community events this way.

# AND DON'T FORGET ABOUT LOCAL MEETUPS!

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Meetups in your area are not only a great way to practice new talks, they're a good place for meeting people you might not otherwise.

Ask them what conferences they've liked or that they want to attend.

And, if you travel for a conference, try to carve out some time to seek out local meetups and maybe present there as well.

This is great grassroots advocacy and will reach a lot of people you wouldn't usually get the chance to see or speak to.

# QUESTIONS ABOUT FINDING CONFERENCES?

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These are the most effective ways of turning up new conferences, but there are others listed on that Public Speaking URL I showed at the start of the training (and will show again later). Now, before I move on to how to keep all these conferences & CFPs straight: Any questions?





# TRACKING AND ORGANISING CONFERENCES & CFPS

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It doesn't help if you come across a conference or CFP only to lose it again

It also doesn't help if the way the team shares these things is only via email or chat

You need a way to track and organise all of these conferences and CFPs



# **SPECIALISED SOFTWARE TOOLS FOR TRACKING THIS**

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There are very few tools out there dedicated to helping conference speakers and speaking teams coordinate

And what few I could find were very not good

# EVMAN

- ▶ Open source (Apache v2.0)
- ▶ Hosted service available
- ▶ Shared across a team
- ▶ Track speaker images, bios, calendars
- ▶ Next to no documentation
- ▶ I would not recommend it

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I was able to find this one, but I was not impressed

This is a half-baked work-in-progress FOSS project

Might do what you need, but the effort to get it there would be high

Actually, let's start there...

# WHAT DO YOU NEED IN A TRACKING TOOL?

- ▶ Conferences

- ▶ Conference dates
- ▶ Conference location
- ▶ CFP deadline
- ▶ Link for more information (or to the CFP)

- ▶ Share across a team

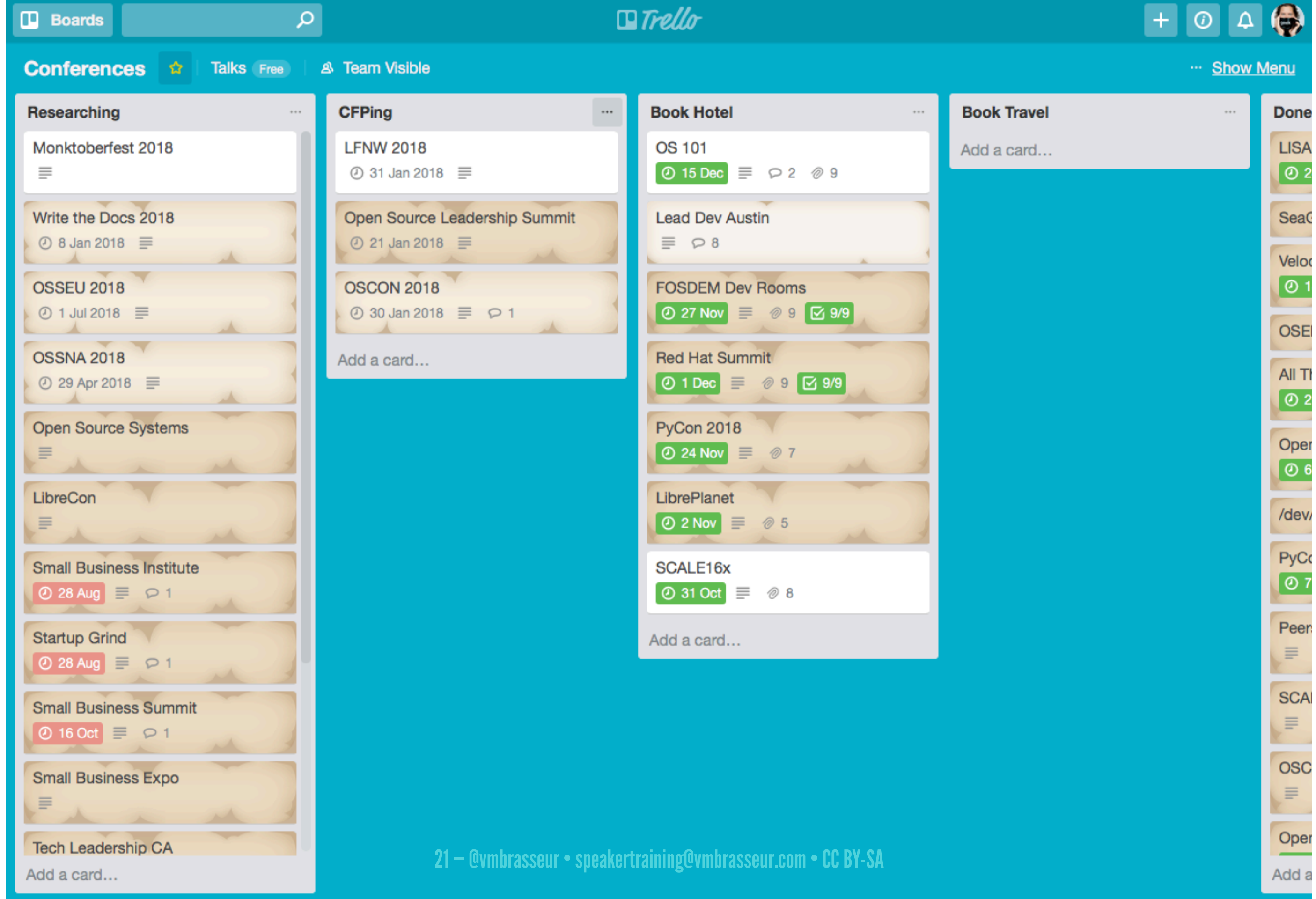
- ▶ Perhaps even track what proposals were submitted & by whom
- ▶ Free (or easy to convince purchasing to approve)

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While you're just getting started, you don't want to invest too much until you can get a handle on the long-term needs of the team

Instead, I recommend a readily-available and free tool





Trello. This is a screencap of the current state of my own Trello board for tracking conferences

Easily supports teams

Easily supports due dates

Can even attach files (like the proposals which you submitted to the conference)

Totally Free

Many integration points, should you need them

# ALSO WORKABLE: SHARED CALENDAR

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Besides these, though, it seems there aren't very many tools which can help you organise this process.

When "a shared calendar" is nearly the best we can do, then there's a product niche which needs filling.

With the rise of devrel/dev advocates/community managers, there's a growing market for tools for this purpose.

STEAL THIS PITCH

# A TOOL DOESN'T MATTER IF THE PROCESS STINKS

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Having a tool doesn't help if you don't use it  
Whatever tool you select, checking and  
updating it must become a regular part of your  
workflow

I don't know your workflow and can't  
recommend how to fit a tool into it

Perhaps making sure checking the tool is a  
part of your 1:1 meetings?

Do what makes most sense for you

# QUESTIONS ABOUT TRACKING AND ORGANISING CONFERENCES AND CFPS?



# LEARNING ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

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We'll get into the details of what makes for a good talk abstract in a moment, but first I need to cover something very important...

# EACH EVENT HAS ITS OWN UNIQUE AUDIENCE

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Even similar events (like DevOps Days) will each still have their own specific audiences.

Different audiences! Different needs!  
Different angles & approaches!

When working on your proposal and on your talk, there is no one size fits all.

# IT'S ALL ABOUT VALUE TO THE AUDIENCE

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Speaking isn't about you. It's not about your company. It's about providing value to the audience.

If you provide value to the audience, that will reflect well on you and on your company

If you just treat every audience like the same audience, they'll know and they'll resent it

"Oh, they're just phoning it in. I, as an audience member, don't feel special at all."

# THE AUDIENCE FIRST JUDGES BY YOUR ABSTRACT

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Programme committee may have more information they can use to judge (your past talks, other fields on the proposal), but the audience only has your abstract. Therefore your abstract must clearly state to the audience what it will get out of investing its time in seeing your talk.

# **NO, YOUR TALK IS NOT "FOR EVERYONE" (PROBABLY)**

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If you think this is the case, odds are very good you haven't thought through your content very well

How you present the material will be different for an audience of product managers than for an audience of webdevs

Learn who your audience is, then craft an abstract which speaks to them



# HOW TO LEARN ABOUT THE AUDIENCE

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So how do you get this  
information?

# CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

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If you're very lucky, the conference organisers have provided audience profile information on the CFP page.

If they haven't contact them and politely ask for the information.

They need to provide this info to potential sponsors, so they definitely have it.

# SPONSORSHIP PROSPECTUS

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That's because they need it for the sponsorship prospectus.

If you don't have time to wait for a response from the organisers, check the sponsorship prospectus for audience information.

# PAST EDITIONS OF THE EVENT

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Check social media to see who was posting about the event in the past.

These people are your audience.

Looking at past schedules can tell you a lot about what the organisers think the audience want to hear, from which you can infer a lot about your audience.

But, really, asking the organisers for this information is your best bet.



# WHAT TO LOOK AT WHEN LEARNING ABOUT THE AUDIENCE

- ▶ Role in software development
- ▶ Experience level
- ▶ Spoken language
- ▶ Recent challenges or developments in their area

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It's rare you'll get just one answer for any of these points, but that's OK.

Try to determine the most common/likely answer and use that

# QUESTIONS ABOUT AUDIENCE?

# **CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TALK ABSTRACT**

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OK, now let's talk about some  
of the characteristics of a good  
talk abstract

# DIRECT AND SUCCINCT

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Make it easy for the audience & they'll like you for it

Don't ramble on

Immediately get to the point of the talk

Keep it short and easy to skim

Drop any extraneous detail or exposition

Remember, you don't have much room on that conference schedule. Make the most use of it.



# COMPLETE

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Economy of words doesn't mean just to use fewer words. It means to use what you have more effectively.

Cover everything you need in the small space you have

# ACCURATE

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Don't bait & switch

List precisely what you will cover

The abstract is a promise you're making to your audience. Don't break your promise by writing an abstract which sets up expectations you don't intend to (or can't) fulfill.

# APPLICABLE

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To the audience, to the conference

The audience should be able to  
use the information

Proposing to teach WebAssembly  
to a room full of ops folks is  
probably not a good idea

# LISTS AUDIENCE TAKE-AWAYS

"By the end of this talk audience members will be able to..."

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Don't make the audience guess what they will learn in your session.

Be very explicit

Answer this question with succinct bullet points

When I'm on conference program committees, I vote down any talk which does not include this.



# WELL-FOUNDED

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Don't propose subjects you're not qualified to present

For instance, don't propose a talk on mental health unless you are a mental health professional or have studied enough to do so.

For instance, don't propose a talk on licenses if you don't have the training or experience to understand the law which underpins it...in that specific country

# DESCRIPTION VS. ABSTRACT VS. PROPOSAL

Abstract: Full talk details

Description: Talk elevator pitch

Proposal: Aaaaall of the fields on the CFP form

(often used interchangeably)

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You'll never know what sort of fields will be on a CFP form, but it's pretty common to see "Description" and "Abstract." Or "short description" and "long description" or some such.

The "Description" (short version) is often the thing which appears in mouse-over text on conference schedules.

It needs to be enticing yet representative of your talk

I advise you write your abstract first

Can then base the short version on the longer one.

Leads to consistency in content, voice, etc.

# QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD ABSTRACT?

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In a moment we'll talk about the mechanics of writing a good abstract.

But before we talk about putting them all together, are there any questions about these characteristics?

# BREAK TIME!

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## Please return in 10 minutes.

# WRITING A GOOD TALK ABSTRACT

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Bottom line: Writing is hard, and writing which is meant to persuade is very hard indeed.

That's why it's so important you know the audience up-front: If you don't know whom you're persuading to accept and see your talk, you're unlikely to convince them to give you the chance to speak.



# A FRAMEWORK FOR A TALK ABSTRACT

1. Introductory paragraph (a couple sentences to hook people)
2. Detail paragraph
3. Bulleted list of audience takeaways
  - ▶ "By the end of this talk audience members will be able to..."
4. Supporting/closing paragraph (if needed)

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More than one way to do it  
But if you're just staring out,  
use this framework  
Until you're more skilled/  
experienced

Experienced free and open source contributors take a lot of terms and concepts for granted, but these things are a foreign language to first time contributors.

While each project has its own special terminology and concepts, this talk will introduce the ones most commonly found in all types of free and open source projects. This will help newcomers to FOSS feel more welcome and comfortable, giving them a better chance at a successful contribution.

This talk will introduce:

- \* The different ways to contribute (it's not all about the code)
- \* Common files and what to do with them
- \* Contributor License Agreement/Developer Certificate of Origin
- \* Issue tracking
- \* Common communication routes
- \* Common project and community roles

By the end of this talk new contributors should feel much more comfortable navigating free and open source projects, feeling more like a native than a tourist.

# TARGET DIRECTLY AT THAT AUDIENCE

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Mostly management? Tone down the tech jargon & focus on business value

Mostly tech operators/developers? Tone down the business speak & focus on benefits to stability, security, etc.

Mostly senior tech folks? Go deep w/your abstract & content.

Mostly earlier in their tech careers? Drop the jargon or explain it as you go.

Gauge your audience and adjust your abstract appropriately.

# NEVER DO A SALES PITCH

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Unless you're in a legit sales situation, never ever ever do a sales pitch in your abstract or your talk

Abstracts by a person from a company & promoting that company's products (even if open source) are "pitch-y."

Pitch-y talks are usually rejected.

It IS TOTALLY POSSIBLE TO speak about a company project

Instead focus on the problem to be solved. Include alternative solutions. Give pros/cons for each

# RARELY A NEED FOR BONA FIDES IN AN ABSTRACT

"Velma has been in this industry since she was very young and really knows what she's talking about."

Don't do this.

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Some new speakers will put a paragraph in their abstract which says something like this.

It wastes space and isn't necessary.

It also makes it impossible for the conference to do a blind review of your proposal.

People are coming for your content, not for you.

Your bona fides are that you proposed a great talk which people want to hear.

Anything else can go in your bio.



# ADDRESS A PROBLEM, NOT A SOLUTION

## ▶ DON'T

▶ "This talk will introduce you to the new framework."

## ▶ DO

▶ "This talk will tell you how to troubleshoot that problem and suggest possible solutions."

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More likely to get a talk accepted if it has practical applications to the audience.

What problems are your audience having?

Don't talk about the concept or the tech

Talk about the problem the concept or the tech helps the audience solve

Addressing a problem creates pathos w/your audience.

"One of us"-ness

Again: know your audience. Webdevs have different problems than sysadmins than scrum masters than CTOs.

# BE DIRECT AND SUCCINCT

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Audience members don't want to read a novel for each possible talk (and neither does the programme committee)

Allowed abstract length will vary.

Aim for between 100–150 words, max

If you exceed 200 words, you probably have a lot of unnecessary stuff in there

Have your friends & colleagues review & edit

# BULLET POINTS ARE YOUR FRIEND

- ▶ Easy
- ▶ To
- ▶ Skim

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Avoid too many large blocks of text

Pull important information out into bullet points

Makes it very easy for the audience members to skim & see whether this is something they want to see

The easier you make it for the audience to do that, the more likely they are to show up to your talk

The easier you make it for the programme committee to see what your talk is all about, the more likely they are to accept it

# EXAMPLES OF GOOD ABSTRACTS

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Abstract, not proposal, as the proposal probably includes a lot of fields we can't see

## Loop better: a deeper look at iteration in Python by Trey Hunner

What's the difference between an iterable, an iterator, and a generator? Do you know how to create infinitely long iterables? Come to this talk to learn some of Python's slightly more advanced looping techniques.

Iterables are a very big deal in Python and they became even more important in Python 3. There's quite a bit beyond the basics when it comes to loops and looping in Python. Let's learn some of Python's slightly more advanced looping techniques!

In this session, we'll take a step back and learn about how looping actually works in Python. We'll then learn about a number of Python looping techniques that you've probably overlooked.

We'll learn about the difference between sequences, iterables, and iterators. We'll also reveal the iterator protocol that powers `for` loops in Python.

After we learn the basics, we'll learn some techniques for working with infinite iterables, generators, and generator expressions.

Attendees will walk away from this session with specific actionable recommendations for refactoring their own code as well as a wealth of new topics to look deeper into after the session.

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# From 2017 North Bay Python



# Stumbling Through Django and How Not To by Melanie Crutchfield

If you're a beginner about to embark on a new Django project adventure, this talk is for you.

When I started my first Django project, I took the "Sure, I think I can figure that out" approach, which is fun! And also dangerous. But exciting! And also horrible because I caused myself a lot of trouble and barfed on my keyboard. (Metaphorically.) Oops.

My hope for this talk is to pass along lessons I learned the hard way, and save the world. Or at least prevent some frustration. :)

We'll talk about:

- version control
- structuring your project
- and how to handle top secret stuff.

We'll also talk about:

- throwing house parties without causing anaphylaxis
- pregnant daddy seahorses
- velociraptors
- and friends.

I promise all of that is related to Django.

# QUESTIONS ABOUT WRITING ABSTRACTS?

# HOW TO WRITE A GOOD PROPOSAL TITLE

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This is the first thing your  
audience usually sees

Important to get it right

But save this for the end, after  
you've nailed your abstract

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TITLE

- ▶ Brief...but not too brief
- ▶ Descriptive, not obscure
- ▶ Accurate but still interesting
- ▶ Actionable

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Should accurately summarise the abstract in a single short line

You can't do this w/o the abstract. This is why you wait until the end to create it.

Should be enticing, yet still accurate

Should show the audience what they'll be able to do by the end of the talk

Should make the audience want to see the abstract to learn more

Should NOT be clickbait

# INFORMATIVE & SNAPPY

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No clickbait

Don't try to be clever if you're not good at that

Be careful with jokes (easy to offend folks, or for people not to understand the joke)

Tell the audience up-front what they're in for

Keep it short



# GOOD TITLES (FROM 2017 NORTH BAY PYTHON)

- ▶ Loop better: a deeper look at iteration in Python [by Trey Hunner](#)
- ▶ Stumbling Through Django and How Not To [by Melanie Crutchfield](#)
- ▶ Call C code quickly and compatibly with CFFI [by Zack Voase](#)
- ▶ Nutshell in a Python: Adapting patterns from shell scripts [by Brett Smith](#)
- ▶ 5 Leadership Skills Every Engineer Needs [by Kathleen Vignos](#)

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As you read each of these titles, you have a very good sense of what the talk is going to be about

# BAD TITLES (NO NAMING, NO SHAMING)

1. They're Watching You
2. Open Panel Forum
3. How to train your HAL 9000
4. Devices & Appliances
5. PUPPIES!

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<!-- Bryan Lunduke, LFNW 2017 -->

<!-- LFNW 2017 -->

<!-- Aaron Chantrill, LFNW 2017 -->

<!-- Wes Morgan, SELF 2017 -->

<!-- I made the last one up -->

These are all very vague. I read them and am not entirely sure what I'd be in for were I to attend one of these talks

What's wrong with each of these?

# QUESTIONS ABOUT WRITING TITLES?

# DISCUSSION TIME!

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Let's review some sample proposals together!

Please raise your hand to speak rather than blurting out suggestions.

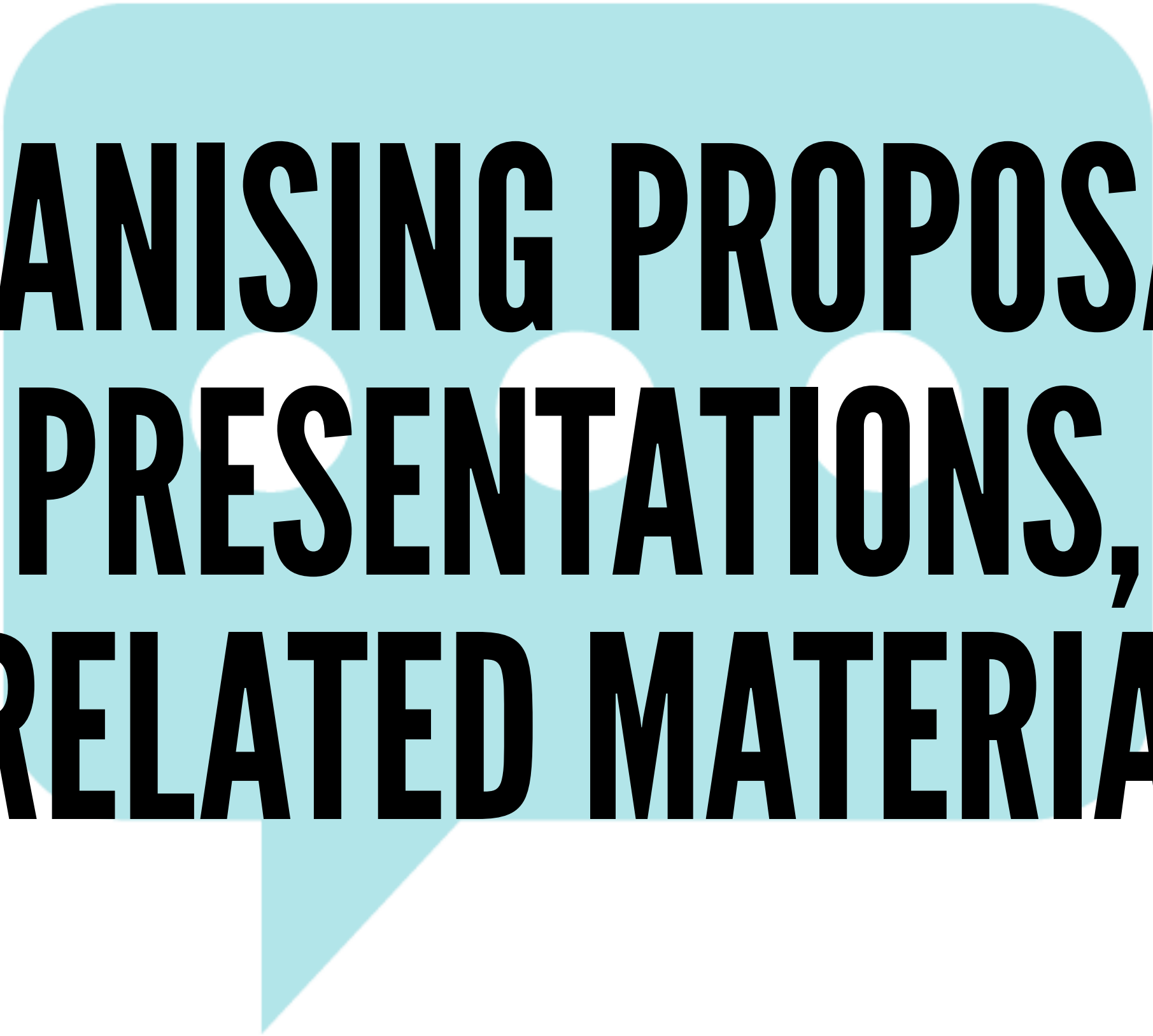
# SAMPLE #1

<https://tinyurl.com/training-proposal-1>

# SAMPLE #2

<https://tinyurl.com/training-proposal-2>





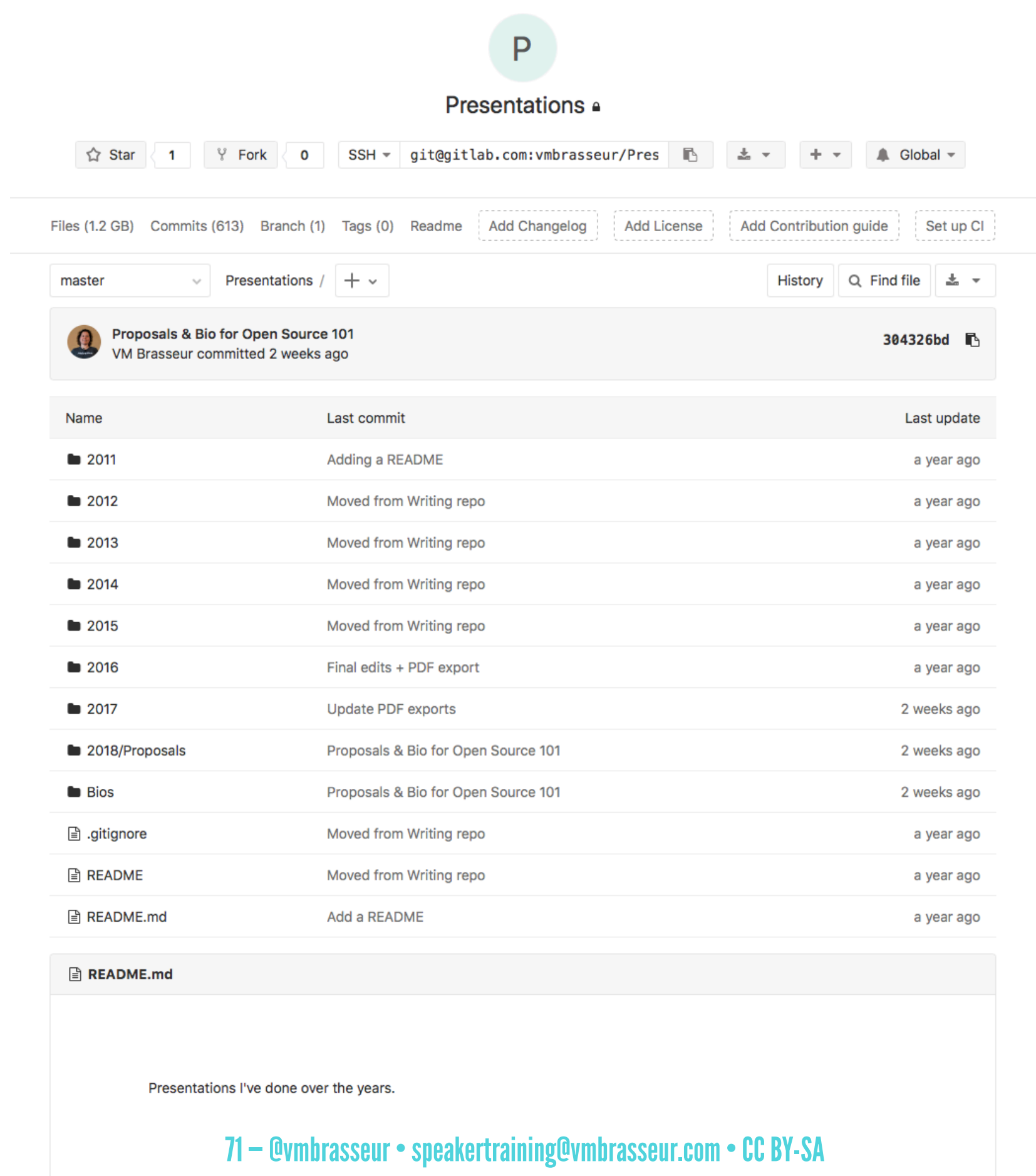
# **ORGANISING PROPOSALS, PRESENTATIONS, & RELATED MATERIALS**

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We've talked about tracking and organising your conferences and CFPs, but what about the stuff you actually write?

**WHAT DO YOU DO  
WITH ALL  
THAT STUFF?**

**HOW DO YOU  
KEEP IT SAFE  
AND EASY TO FIND?**



C'mon, people. We're in tech.

Put this stuff into version control, for crying out loud.

This is my Presentations repo on GitLab.

I'll walk you through it, but note that this is just a suggestion. Your team will likely need a different organisation strategy, but should still consider committing all of the same things.

If you're not familiar with version control, don't worry. The web UIs for GitHub and GitLab make it approachable even for someone new to committing files.

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Presentations / 2017 /

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





Update PDF exports

VM Brasseur committed 2 weeks ago

210b5f94



Name	Last commit	Last update
..		
 ATO/drivethru	ATO slides	a month ago
 ConFoo	Slides for upload	9 months ago
 DevWorld/speakertraining	Exports	3 months ago
 FLOSS-UK/keynote	Exported slides	9 months ago
 LCA	Add PDF	11 months ago
 LISA	Add a note that comments are not welcome	a month ago
 NBPy/speakertraining	Update PDF exports	2 weeks ago
 O'Reilly	Copy a bunch of files	8 months ago
 OSCON/succession_planning	OSCON slide PDFs	7 months ago
 OSEN/emergingmarket	Final changes and PDF exports	3 months ago
 OSSNA/drivethru	Remove stuff after practice	3 months ago
 OpenWest	Final for OpenWest	5 months ago
 PDXDevOps/Failure	Slide exports	7 months ago
 PDX_Linux/businessofcommunity	Rename directory	11 months ago
 PeersConf/management	Add no comments to Q&A speaker notes	7 months ago
 Proposals	Proposal for the Symphony Foundation event	3 months ago
 PyConAU	Add credits formatting	4 months ago
 SCaLE/succession_planning	Slides to upload to IA	9 months ago
 SeaGL	Files for the 2017 party	2 months ago
 Velocity/Velocity/orienteering	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 WtDPDX/IA	Updates for WtD PDX presentation	6 months ago

Each event receives its own directory.

Each directory contains the specific version of the talk (or talks) I presented at that event.

A similar effect could be accomplished using directories for talks then branches for each conference where the talk is presented

The important part is that a talk is an evolving thing. Being able to track that evolution is very helpful

# QUESTION: WHAT SHOULD YOU COMMIT TO THE REPO?

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Which actually brings up a good question. During the process of creating your presentation, what should you commit to the repo?



# ANSWER: EVERYTHING

- ▶ **Presentation files**
- ▶ **Example code**
- ▶ **Images used in the presentation**
- ▶ **Video/audio (if your version control provider allows it)**
- ▶ **Everything**

**"EVEN IMAGES? REALLY?"**

**YES, REALLY**

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These can disappear very easily  
Hard to re-use later if you can't  
find them

Can allow you to track the  
source and license of each  
image very easily

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Copy Velocity files over

VM Brasseur committed 2 months ago

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Name	Last commit	Last update
..		
 CC.BY Boring Meeting by MrBigCity on Flickr.jpg	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY Girl Scout Day Camp by Peter and Joyce Grace ...	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY Girl Scouts, circa 1940s_by Seattle Municipal Ar...	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY Girls Hiking in Aspens Mosca Pass by Great San...	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY IMG_0714 by Nicola on Flickr.jpg	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY Roslyn_cat by ocean yamaha on Flickr.jpg	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY Welcome by garryknight on Flickr.jpg	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY Youths from a Soul River Inc deployment to the ...	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY daddy and the girls by Anatahea Utley on Flickr....	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC.BY lily the trail blazer by Alison Squiers Photograph...	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago
 CC BY-Compass by Maxim Kulikov-The Noun Project	Copy Velocity files over	2 months ago

Name the file with the license, the source, and the creator name

Makes copyright questions very simple to answer

Makes it easy to attribute the images

Also, provides the information needed if you ever need to find the original image again

Don't underestimate how useful this will be. Trust me, if you do a fair bit of public speaking you will never regret committing images in this way.

# AND DON'T FORGET TO COMMIT YOUR PROPOSALS

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A fact which comes as a surprise to many new public speakers in tech is that they **SHOULD** present their talks multiple times.

Reach a larger audience this way.

Allows you to refine and improve the talk.

But you can't really present a talk multiple times if you don't **PROPOSE** it multiple times.

Committing your proposals makes this much easier.

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Proposal for the Symphony Foundation event

VM Brasseur committed 3 months ago

598bc8ff

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Name	Last commit	Last update
..		
<div><div>File icon</div>ato-bizofcommunity.txt</div>	ATO 2017 stuff	8 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>ato-drivethru.txt</div>	ATO 2017 stuff	8 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>ato-fail.txt</div>	ATO 2017 stuff	8 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>ato-successionplanning.txt</div>	ATO 2017 stuff	8 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>cls-privilege.txt</div>	Meh. I guess it'll do	10 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>cls-winning.txt</div>	First draft of Winning CLS keynote proposal	10 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>confoomontreal-bizofcommunity.txt</div>	ConFoo proposals & Bio	a year ago
<div><div>File icon</div>confoomontreal-mgmt.txt</div>	ConFoo proposals & Bio	a year ago
<div><div>File icon</div>confoomontreal-remote.txt</div>	ConFoo proposals & Bio	a year ago
<div><div>File icon</div>devxcon-bizofcommunity.txt</div>	Add proposals & bios for DevxCon & OpenW...	8 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>devxcon-drivethru.txt</div>	Add proposals & bios for DevxCon & OpenW...	8 months ago
<div><div>File icon</div>devxcon-successionplanning.txt</div>	Add proposals & bios for DevxCon & OpenW...	8 months ago

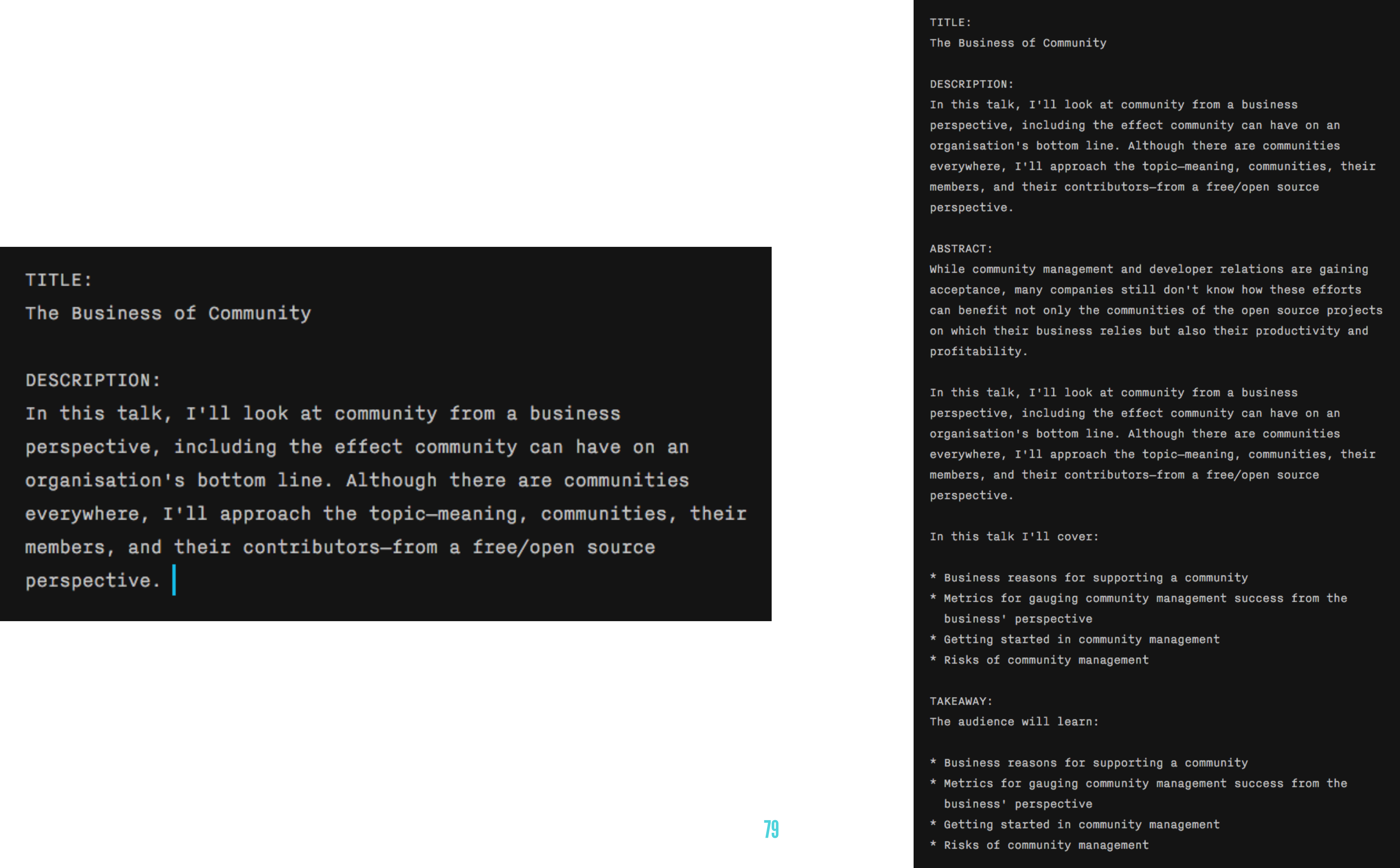
You put a lot of work into that abstract. Why would you use it only once?

Here are a few of my proposals from 2017. You can see that some of them make multiple appearances, even on this small piece of the complete list.

Why save a different version for each conference?

Because different CFPs ask for different things





79

On the left is a proposal for ConFoo in Montreal

On the right is a proposal for the same talk but at OSCON

Tracking the different versions allows me to repurpose the proposal in different ways as needed.

It also means I can check in on what I actually proposed.

Not all conferences allow you to view your proposals after they're submitted, especially if they use Google Forms for their CFP tool.

This way I can still see what I submitted.



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Presentations / Bios /

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Proposals & Bio for Open Source 101  
VM Brasseur committed 2 weeks ago

304326bd

Name	Last update
..	
<div>ato2016.txt</div> <div>Add ATO bio</div> <div>a year ago</div>	
<div>ato2017.txt</div> <div>ATO 2017 stuff</div> <div>8 months ago</div>	
<div>codeland2018.txt</div> <div>Add Codeland 2018 files</div> <div>a month ago</div>	
<div>confoo2018.txt</div> <div>Add ConFoo Montreal proposals &amp; bio</div> <div>3 months ago</div>	
<div>confoomontreal2017.txt</div> <div>ConFoo proposals &amp; Bio</div> <div>a year ago</div>	
<div>daycon2017.txt</div> <div>Add proposals &amp; bios for DayCon &amp; OpenWest</div> <div>8 months ago</div>	

For various reasons, you may use different bios in different places

If nothing else, it can be interesting to look back & see how you described yourself.

This came in handy for me recently: A conference changed my bio. I was able to point at my committed version and say, "No, that's not what I gave you. Please return it to normal."

So you never know how you'll use this stuff

# YMMV

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This organisation works for me. It will probably not be right for a team of several people.

Consider your needs & requirements beforehand and design the repo which is right for you.

However, I do encourage you to consider committing all these types of files in some way.

# **QUESTIONS ABOUT ORGANISING PROPOSALS, PRESENTATIONS, AND RELATED MATERIALS?**

# REJECTION 🥲

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If you're going to be playing  
the CFP game, you're going to  
have your proposals rejected.  
A LOT.



**86 PROPOSALS SUBMITTED IN 2017**



**22 ACCEPTED**



**THAT'S A 25% ACCEPTANCE RATE**

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That's a whoooooole lot of rejection  
But what's the goal here? Is it to  
get **EVERYTHING** accepted? Or  
to speak at the event?  
So let's take a different  
perspective on the numbers...



**PROPOSED TO 22 EVENTS IN 2017**



**SPOKE AT 18 EVENTS IN 2017**



**THAT'S AN 82% ACCEPTANCE RATE**

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If you look at it this way, it was  
a really good year!



**"...REACTED TO A NEGATIVE INTERACTION...SIX TIMES MORE STRONGLY THAN THEY REACTED TO A POSITIVE INTERACTION..."**

<https://hbr.org/2013/03/the-delicate-art-of-giving-feedback>

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Don't get me wrong: It's still an emotional hit to receive that rejection email (or a stack of them all at once).

It's just human nature, it seems.

Studies show that for each negative thing we experience, we need 5-6 positive things to offset it.

But keeping the goal—speaking at the conference at all—front and center helps immensely.

# CHANGE THE STORY

Not: "Drat, I had 4 talks rejected from SomeConf."

But: "Hey, I got a talk accepted! I'll be speaking at SomeConf!"

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It can be difficult, but try to focus on your wins.

What can make that easier is giving yourself a better chance of having a win in the first place

# YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO SCORE WITH MORE SHOTS ON GOAL

Don't limit yourself to only one proposal per conference.

Submit as many as you wish  
(or as many as the conference will allow, if they set a max)

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If you have three talk ideas which are all applicable to the conference's audience, submit three proposals

Five applicable talk ideas? Five proposals

Proposing multiple talks is accepted best practice on the conference circuit

Remember: If you do this and get all of your proposals accepted, you can tell the organisers you're only able to present one or two of them.

You don't HAVE to do them all.

# #SPEAKERLIFE

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It also can help to see that even very experienced conference speakers get rejected. It's not just you.

My friend Genehack has started this hashtag which a lot of speakers now use to share their rejections

New speakers have told us that it's very helpful for them to see that even seasoned and popular presenters receive those rejection emails.

# SO WHY ARE YOUR TALKS BEING REJECTED, ANYWAY?

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Another perspective which helps is that of the programme committee.

Why are they rejecting your talks?

There are many reasons, a lot of which have nothing at all to do with you.

What follows obviously isn't a complete list.

# LIMITED NUMBER OF TALKS FOR EACH SPEAKER

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If you propose several talks,  
naturally some will be rejected

Many conferences have policies in  
place to limit the number of talks any  
one speaker may give at each event

This helps to make room for lots of  
different speakers and perspectives



# MULTIPLE PROPOSALS ON A SIMILAR TOPIC

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Particularly if your talk is on a topic which is currently very popular, it's likely to be rejected if it hasn't taken a unique and useful approach to the topic

Careful crafting of your idea and your abstract can help a lot here

# PROGRAMME EVOLVES TO HAVE OTHER NEEDS

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Sometimes as the committee reviews proposals, it becomes obvious that the programme needs to go in a certain direction

In these cases, even though your proposal was a good fit for the stated requirements, it may no longer fit with the direction they're taking the conference.

There isn't really anything you can do about this.

# TOPIC IS GOOD BUT TARGETED AT THE WRONG AUDIENCE

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You may have an amazing proposal on computing at the edge...

If your abstract is talking about the technical nuts and bolts of it but your audience will primarily be on the business side of things...

It happens all the time: Conferences receive proposals which don't fit their audience.

Please take the time to do audience research before proposing.



# IT'S JUST A BAD PROPOSAL

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And, sometimes, it's entirely your fault.

You misjudge the audience

You don't list any takeaways

You don't discuss any problems to solve

Your writing is horrible

PLEASE collaborate with your friends and colleagues to have them review and edit your proposals.

# **YOU WON'T KNOW WHY IF YOU DON'T ASK FOR FEEDBACK**

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Whatever the reason is for rejection,  
you won't know

**AND YOU WON'T IMPROVE**

If you don't ask for feedback.

Events don't always have the  
bandwidth to do this, but it never  
hurts to ask (politely)

# QUESTIONS ABOUT REJECTION?



A close-up photograph of a dog's face, likely a Weimaraner, wrapped in a grey towel. The dog's eyes are closed, and its pink tongue is sticking out. The text "WRAPPING UP" is overlaid in large, bold, black capital letters.

# WRAPPING UP

## Slides

<https://archive.org/details/20180228-speakertraining>

## Resources

[https://github.com/vmbrasseur/Public\\_Speaking](https://github.com/vmbrasseur/Public_Speaking)

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Now, any questions about  
ANY of what I've just dumped  
in your lap?